

CAPITOL HILL SECURITY

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, first of all, I have been speaking about the security of the Capitol Hill police. I made a commitment to myself, much less to others, that I would continue to speak on it. I always start with the service for Officers Chestnut and Gibson and a commitment I am absolutely sure we made to the Capitol Hill police that we would do everything possible to assure security for them, much less the public.

One of the things we have to do—and we have to do it today; if not today, tomorrow; but I don't think we should let time go by—is make whatever kind of policy change and whatever kind of commitment of resources need to be made to assure that at every post there are two officers.

Again, a lot of the posts have many people entering. If there is one officer with lots of people coming through a door and, God forbid, somebody deranged enters with the intention of committing an act of violence, it would be very difficult for that single officer to deal with such a person.

I again call on all Members to do better by these police officers and to live up to this commitment. I am sure Republicans and Democrats all agree, but I will focus on this until I am sure we have followed through on a commitment we made because I don't think we have followed through on it yet.

CHECHNYA

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, yesterday I met with members of the Chechen Government. They discussed the horrific conditions currently facing their homeland. It is clear that the Russian Government must move to immediately allow into Chechnya and neighboring Ingushetia an international monitoring force to monitor and report on the humanitarian situation. It must also immediately move to assist those persons who have been displaced from Chechnya as a result of this conflict and to allow representatives of the international community access to those persons in order to provide humanitarian relief.

As many of you know, the Russian assault on the Chechen capital Grozny is only one more campaign in a long series of Russian military offensives in Chechnya. In September I expressed my concerns to Boris Yeltsin and Putin about the humanitarian tragedy that was—for the second time—unfolding in Chechnya. It is hard to imagine that after the use of force in Chechnya from 1994–1996—which left over 80,000 civilians dead—the Russian leadership could again see the use of force as enhancing the prospects for a durable settlement to this conflict. Nonetheless, the Russian leadership has again chosen to use force and the current tragedy has now reached unimaginable heights.

Russian forces have used indiscriminate and disproportionate force in

their bombings of civilian targets. This has resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and displaced over 200,000 others. But the suffering is not limited to Chechnya. The neighboring province of Ingushetia has been flooded with refugees. Mr. President, I remind you of the recent snow storm that swept the east coast. I need not remind you of how it compares to a Russian winter. A humanitarian crisis equal to that within Chechnya itself is beginning in Ingushetia.

I implore President Putin to hold firm to his commitment made to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Group last month to allow into Ingushetia an international monitoring presence to determine what is happening—to determine the best means of getting some immediate relief to the refugees and those trapped in Chechnya. And I urge the Russian Government to lift its press restrictions so that the citizens of the Russian Federation see the truth for what it is. For there is no doubt that if the people knew the full story of human suffering in Chechnya—on both sides of the conflict—they would devote every effort to its peaceful resolution.

Russian authorities maintain a virtual ban on access to Chechnya by international and local journalists. Groups—such as the Soldiers' Mothers Committee can only monitor Russian casualties through their own sources, through word of mouth, and struggle to determine the fate of their sons in Chechnya. In the past few weeks Russia's main commercial television station was kicked out of the military's journalist pool for showing an interview with a Russian military officer describing troop losses, and Russian officials arrested Andrei Babitsky, a 10-year-veteran reporter for the U.S.-sponsored Radio Liberty, who had been reporting from the capital Grozny. The Russian Government then exchanged the journalist for Russian soldiers held by Chechen rebels yet as of today, the journalist has not been seen or heard from.

The stories of the refugees fleeing Chechnya are horrific: incidents of widespread looting, summary executions, detentions, and rape.

Three weeks ago the Russian Commander for the North Caucasus Group of Forces blamed Russian "mistakes" on their "soft-heartedness." He then ordered that only children under 10, men over 60, and girls and women would be considered refugees. Although the order was eventually repealed, teenage boys and civilian men had been in effect sentenced to die. Orders such as these are intolerable and must be condemned. It is fundamentally unacceptable to deny any civilian the right to flee the fighting—to trap them in this dangerous war. And where will these trapped civilians go? Into detention camps? No one needs to be reminded of the systematic torture that took place in detention camps set up to detain Chechens in the 1994–96 Chechen

war. That event stains the memory of the Chechen people—and its happening again. Today adolescent boys are being ripped from their mothers arms at the border as they try to escape. Mothers remain in the war zone because they refuse to leave without their sons.

Zura, a mother of three, told human rights monitors at the border that guards prevented a 59-year-old man from crossing over, and that two boys, aged 12 and 13, made it past border guards only by concealing themselves on the bus. Russian leadership are obligated under humanitarian law to do everything to avoid civilian casualties and allow civilians to flee to safety.

Then there are the numerous reports of rape. In the Chechen town of Shali a six-months pregnant 23-year-old woman was raped and murdered. Her mother-in-law was executed in the same incident. And Mr. President, many incidents of rape and sexual abuse go unreported. For many women in towns and villages all over Chechnya the shame is simply too great—they won't come forward to report these horrible crimes. Chechnya's culture and national traditions made it difficult to document cases of rape and sexual abuse—unmarried women who are raped are unlikely to be able to get married, and married women who are raped are likely to be divorced by their husbands. The effects of these rapes on Chechen society will be profound and long lasting. I remind the Russian leadership that rape is war crime.

President Putin must move quickly to resolve this situation in a manner consistent with Russia's obligations to the international community. I urge my colleagues to join me in full condemnation of the use of indiscriminate force against the civilians in Chechnya and to remind the Russian leadership that the world is watching. The Russian Government must move to immediately allow into Chechnya and Ingushetia an international monitoring force to determine what is happening. It must immediately move to assist those persons who have been displaced from Chechnya as a result of this conflict and to allow representatives of the international community access to those persons in order to provide humanitarian relief. And the Russian leadership must begin now to investigate and prosecute those responsible for human rights abuses in Chechnya—it promised to do this after the last Chechen War but failed to do so. Those responsible for human rights abuses in Chechnya must be held accountable.

President Putin must end this conflict and must devote every effort, including the acceptance of third party mediation offers made months ago by the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to its peaceful resolution.

THE BUDGET

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I have not read his article today in the